

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Farm Service Agency
Washington, DC 20250

Notice AO-1595

For: State and County Offices

**Soybean Promotion, Research, and Information Program (Soybean Checkoff Program)
Request for Referendum May 5 Through May 30, 2014**

Approved by: Acting Deputy Administrator, Field Operations



1 Overview

A Background

The Soybean Promotion and Research Order (Order), or more commonly known as the Soybean Checkoff Program, was implemented July 9, 1991, as authorized by the Soybean Promotion, Research, and Consumer Information Act (Act), to maintain and expand existing markets and develop new markets for soybeans and soybean products. The Act required that the Secretary would:

- conduct a referendum among eligible soybean producers to determine whether the Order should be continued
- conduct a producer poll within 18 months of the Secretary's announcement of the results of the initial referendum
- give soybean producers the opportunity to request an additional referendum on the Order once every 5 years after the conduct of the initial referendum.

Note: If enough producers request a referendum, then a referendum would be held within 1 year after the results are announced.

Eligible producers may request a referendum at their local FSA County Office during a 4-week period May 5 through May 30, 2014. If at least 10 percent (not in excess of one-fifth of which may be producers in any 1 State) of the eligible producers participate in the Request for Referendum, a referendum will be held within 1 year from that determination. If results of the Request for Referendum indicate that a referendum is **not** supported, a referendum would **not** be conducted. The results of the Request for Referendum will be published in FR.

The AMS Administrator is responsible for conducting the referendum. FSA is responsible for assisting AMS with the referendum.

Disposal Date	Distribution
July 1, 2014 3-27-14	State Offices; State Offices relay to County Offices

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1 Overview (Continued)

B Purpose

This notice provides instructions to State and County Offices on how to carry out FSA's responsibilities in conducting the soybean Request for Referendum.

Important: It is extremely important that State and County Offices follow this notice **timely and accurately**.

C Contact

State Offices shall direct questions about this notice to Rick Pinkston, Field Operations Staff, by either of the following:

- e-mail to **rick.pinkston@wdc.usda.gov**
- telephone at 202-720-1857.

2 Action

A State and County Office Action

State and County Offices shall assist AMS in conducting the Request for Referendum according to this paragraph and Exhibits 1 through 6. AMS provided the instructions.

Note: The United Soybean Board (Board) will reimburse FSA for expenses incurred.

Step	Action
1	<p>County Offices shall publicize the Request for Referendum by including Request for Referendum information in regular newspaper articles, county newsletters, radio programs, and/or available social media outlets. County Offices must use the news release or excerpts from the release (Exhibit 2) when publicizing the Request for Referendum.</p> <p>Notes: County Offices shall not prepare a special mailing of postcards or newsletters to publicize the Request for Referendum. Information distributed through the normal media outlets mentioned in this step will be sufficient announcement of the Request for Referendum.</p> <p>Costs incurred for special mailings will not be reimbursed by the Board. However, include excerpts from the news release titled, "USDA Sets Date for Soybean Request for Referendum" (Exhibit 2), in routine County Office newsletters, free press, or available social media. The AMS news release is posted at www.ams.usda.gov/AMSV1.0/SoybeanPage.</p>

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2 Action (Continued)

A State and County Office Action (Continued)

Step	Action
2	<p>County Offices shall:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• maintain a register of associated and reimbursable costs and report these costs to the State Office by June 25, 2014, using Exhibit 3• transmit the results of the Request for Referendum to the State Office by June 25, 2014, using Exhibit 3.
3	<p>State Offices shall:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• summarize the County Office costs using Exhibit 3 <p>Note: Associated costs incurred by the State Office shall be included in the State report.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• summarize the County Office results using Exhibit 3• transmit the summarized costs and summarized results using Exhibit 3 to Rick Pinkston, Field Operations Staff, by e-mail to rick.pinkston@wdc.usda.gov by June 27, 2014.

Note: Exhibit 3 is available at <http://intranet.fsa.usda.gov>. CLICK “FFAS Employee Forms/Publications Site” and CLICK “Find Current Forms Using Our Form Number Search”. For “Form Number”, ENTER “Soybean Results”.

B Maintaining FSA’s Impartiality

It is extremely important that State and County Offices follow this notice accurately and according to the dates and timeframe provided. AMS requested FSA’s assistance to conduct this Request for Referendum.

Caution: State and County Office employees and COC members shall use caution to ensure that FSA is **not** exhibiting bias or partiality. State and County Offices shall **not** become involved in the following:

- issues relating to the USDA regulations in 7 CFR Part 1220
- encouraging or discouraging persons from participating in the Request for Referendum
- determining eligibility other than in an official capacity
- prejudice for or against the Soybean Promotion and Research Program.

2 Action (Continued)

C Downloading LS-51-1

County Offices should obtain LS-51-1 (Exhibit 6) through the Internet and reproduce locally as necessary. LS-51-1 is available from the AMS web site at <http://www.ams.usda.gov/AMSV1.0/SoybeaninformationontheSoybeanRequestforReferendum>. On the Research and Promotion Programs Screen that will be displayed, under “I Want To”, CLICK “Go to the Soybean Referendum Form 51-1 - PDF”.

Note: LS-51-1 will **only** be available on the AMS web site **May 5** through **May 30, 2014**.

AMS Instructions for Conducting the Request for Referendum

1 Conducting the Request for Referendum on the Order

A Responsibilities

The AMS Administrator is responsible for conducting the Request for Referendum.

FSA will assist in conducting the Request for Referendum by:

- publicizing the Request for Referendum
- accepting requests for a referendum from soybean producers
- confirming eligibility of those persons who file a request for a referendum
- reporting Request for Referendum results.

B Purpose

The purpose of these instructions is to:

- describe the significance of the Request for Referendum
- establish procedures about:
 - State and County Office actions
 - eligibility
 - showing evidence an assessment was paid
 - canvassing and counting LS-51-1 forms and reporting results
 - retaining and disposing records.

2 Request for Referendum Period

A Significance of the Request for Referendum

Only those eligible persons who want a referendum would need to request a referendum on the Order would participate. If at least 10 percent (not in excess of one-fifth of which may be producers in any one State) of the 569,998 eligible producers participate in the Request for Referendum, a referendum will be held within 1 year from that determination. Participation is voluntary.

If results of the Request for Referendum indicate that a referendum is not supported, a referendum would not be conducted.

B Time and Place of Request for Referendum

The Request for Referendum will be held at County Offices **May 5 through May 30, 2014.**

AMS Instructions for Conducting the Request for Referendum (Continued)**3 Eligibility****A Eligibility Requirements**

The representative period for establishing eligibility for the Request for Referendum shall be the period from January 1, 2012, through December 31, 2013. Persons who were engaged in the production of soybeans and who provide documentation, such as a sales receipt or remittance form, **showing that they paid an assessment** on soybeans from January 1, 2012, through December 31, 2013, are eligible to request a referendum.

The Soybean Act and Order defines “**person**” as any individual, group of individuals, partnership, corporation, association, cooperative, or any other legal entity. The Soybean Act and Order defines “**producer**” as any person engaged in the growing of soybeans in the United States who owns or who shares the ownership and risk of loss of such soybeans.

The representative period is January 1, 2012, through December 31, 2013.

Notes: A group of individuals, such as any of the following, who are able to provide documentation that they were engaged in the production of soybeans between January 1, 2012, and December 31, 2013, shall be entitled to cast only 1 request for a referendum:

- members of a family
- joint tenants
- tenants in common
- partnerships, general or limited
- owners of community property
- corporations.

Any individual member of a group, who is an eligible person separate from the group, may request a referendum separately.

Example: Husband and wife own operation A. Wife owns operation B. Two requests may be cast, 1 for operation A and 1 for operation B, if both operations provide separate supporting documentation for each operation.

AMS Instructions for Conducting the Request for Referendum (Continued)**3 Eligibility (Continued)****B Participating in Request for Referendum or FSA-211**

Participating in the Request for Referendum by proxy or FSA-211 (to act for another) is **not** authorized, except that an authorized representative of any eligible producer entity (other than an individual person), such as a corporation or partnership, may request a referendum on behalf of that entity. FSA-211 is **not** applicable because it specifically deals with FSA programs.

- An officer or authorized representative of a qualified corporation, association, or limited partnership may request a referendum for that corporation, association, or limited partnership.
- A guardian, administrator, executor, or trustee of any qualified estate or trust may request a referendum for that estate or trust.
- Proxy registration is **not** authorized. An individual cannot request a referendum on behalf of another individual, such as spouse, share crop lease, etc.

Important: Under **no** circumstance should any person wanting to request a referendum be refused.

4 Request for Referendum Boxes and Obtaining LS-51-1**A Request for Referendum Boxes**

County Offices shall provide a holding box or container of sufficient size so arranged that no LS-51-1 can be read or removed without breaking seals on the container.

B Obtaining LS-51-1

Eligible persons may obtain LS-51-1 in-person, by mail, FAX, or telephone. The County Office shall mail directly to the person, at the address provided by the person, if requested by mail, FAX, or telephone. Persons may also obtain LS-51-1 through the Internet at **<http://www.ams.usda.gov/AMSV1.0/SoybeaninformationontheSoybeanRequestforReferendum>**. On the Research and Promotion Programs Screen that will be displayed, under “I Want To”, CLICK “**Go to the Soybean Referendum Form 51-1 - PDF**”.

In-person, mail, or FAX requests **must** be for only one LS-51-1.

Note: A list of names is **not** an individual request.

AMS Instructions for Conducting the Request for Referendum (Continued)**5 Completing LS-51-1****A Overview**

County Offices **must** provide all persons the opportunity to request a referendum during regular work hours **May 5 through May 30, 2014**.

A completed and signed LS-51-1 and supporting documentation **must** be returned to the County Office where the person's farm records are administratively located.

For the person **not** participating in FSA programs, the opportunity to participate in the Request for Referendum will be provided at the County Office serving the county where the person's operation is located. If an operation is located in several counties, the voting office shall be determined based on the major portion of the operation's location. For the producer **not** participating in FSA programs, the opportunity to participate will be provided at the County Office where the person owns or rents land.

Note: Each person is entitled to participate 1 time.

B Eligible Persons Action

Eligible persons **must**:

- complete LS-51-1 in its entirety
- provide **supporting documentation**, such as a sales receipt or remittance form showing that the **person paid an assessment** soybeans between January 1, 2012, through December 31, 2013
- sign LS-51-1 certifying that they paid an assessment on soybeans January 1, 2012, through December 31, 2013.

C In-Person at the County Office

A person who obtains LS-51-1 in-person at the appropriate County Office may complete and return LS-51-1 at that time. The person **must**:

- complete and sign LS-51-1 in its entirety **and** attach (staple) the supporting documentation
- place LS-51-1 and attached supporting documentation in the holding box or container.

Note: If a person requesting a referendum wants the original supporting documentation returned, make a copy to attach to LS-51-1 and return the original supporting documentation to that person.

AMS Instructions for Conducting the Request for Referendum (Continued)**5 Completing LS-51-1 (Continued)****D By Mail or FAX**

Persons who return LS-51-1 by mail or FAX **must** complete and sign LS-51-1 in its entirety, and return it to the appropriate County Office along with supporting documentation.

When LS-51-1 is returned by mail or FAX, the County Office shall:

- **date stamp** LS-51-1 (must be received in County Office COB **June 5, 2014**).
- attach any supporting documentation (copies are acceptable)
- place LS-51-1 and supporting documentation in the holding box or container.

Note: FSA-237 does **not** need to be on file for LS-51-1's returned by FAX.

6 Canvassing Requests**A Overview**

The names of persons participating in the Request for Referendum shall be **confidential** and may **not** be divulged except as the Secretary may direct.

Canvassing LS-51-1's shall take place on **June 6, 2014**. At least two COC members shall assist with the canvassing. If the County Office serves more than 1 county, then a COC member from each county served by the office shall assist in the canvassing.

Exception: STC or SED, if authorized by STC, may designate the following:

- CED and a State or County Office employee to canvass requests if it is determined that the number of LS-51-1's is so limited that having COC members present would be impractical
- CED and/or a State or County Office employee to canvass requests in any emergency situation precluding at least two COC members from being present to canvass the requests.

LS-51-1's for the Request for Referendum shall be canvassed according to the following subparagraphs.

Note: It is the responsibility of the persons participating in the Request for Referendum to provide information needed by the County Office to determine eligibility. It is **not** the responsibility of the County Office to obtain this information.

AMS Instructions for Conducting the Request for Referendum (Continued)**6 Canvassing Requests (Continued)****B Valid LS-51-1's**

FSA will consider LS-51-1 as being valid if LS-51-1 has been completed in its entirety and supporting documentation has been provided.

C Ineligible Participants

If FSA **cannot** determine that a person is eligible based on the submitted supporting documentation, or if the person fails to submit supporting documentation, the person shall be determined to be ineligible.

D Invalid LS-51-1's

Invalid LS-51-1's may include, but are **not** limited to, the following:

- LS-51-1 is **not** signed, completed in its entirety, or all required information has **not** been provided
- LS-51-1 and supporting documentation returned **in person** or **by FAX** was **not** received by COB **May 30, 2014**
- LS-51-1 and supporting documentation returned **by mail** was **not** postmarked by **May 30, 2014**
- LS-51-1 and supporting documentation returned **by mail** was **not** received in the County Office on or before **June 5, 2014**
- LS-51-1 or supporting documentation is mutilated or marked in such a way that any required information on LS-51-1 or supporting documentation is illegible
- LS-51-1 and supporting documentation was **not** returned to the appropriate County Office.

AMS Instructions for Conducting the Request for Referendum (Continued)

6 Canvassing Requests (Continued)

E Notification of Ineligibility

If FSA **cannot** determine that a person is eligible based on the submitted documentation, or if the person fails to submit the required documentation, the person shall be determined to be ineligible. FSA shall notify ineligible persons in writing, as soon as practicable, but no later than **June 11, 2014**. Use the language shown in the following notification letter of ineligibility.

Dear [*challenged participant's name*]:

This is to inform you that your eligibility to participate in the request for a referendum on the Soybean Promotion, Research, and Consumer Information Order has been questioned.

In order for us to determine if your Request for Referendum is valid, you must provide us with supporting documentation showing that you were engaged in the production of soybeans January 1, 2012, through December 31, 2013, and paid an assessment.

If, within five business days after the postmark date of this letter, we do not receive in the County Office additional documentation supporting your eligibility to participate in the Request for Referendum, your ballot will not be eligible to be counted.

F Appeals

A person declared to be ineligible by FSA can appeal the decision and provide additional documentation to the County Office within 5 workdays after the postmark date of the notification letter of ineligibility according to subparagraph E. FSA will make a final decision on the person's eligibility and notify the person of the decision no later than **June 18, 2014**. Use the language shown in the following letter to notify the person of the decision. Ensure that the second paragraph reflects the decision made by FSA.

Dear [*challenged participant's name*]:

This is to inform you that FSA has reviewed the documents that you provided in connection with the appeal regarding your eligibility to participate in the request for a referendum on the Soybean Promotion, Research, and Consumer Information Order.

Based on your documentation, we have determined that you (*meet/do not meet*) the eligibility requirements. We are, therefore, (*including/not including*) your Request for Referendum among those that will be counted in the Request for Referendum.

AMS Instructions for Conducting the Request for Referendum (Continued)**7 Additional Information****A Counting Requests**

If there are **no** ineligibility determinations to resolve, LS-51-1's shall be counted on the same day as LS-51-1's are canvassed on **June 6, 2014**.

For County Offices that do **have** ineligibility determinations to resolve, LS-51-1's shall be counted **after** the ineligible determinations have been resolved, but no later than **June 18, 2014**.

LS-51-1's shall be counted as follows:

- total number of producers who filed LS-51-1, Request for Referendum
- number of eligible producers requesting a referendum
- number of ineligible producers requesting a referendum
- number of valid requests for a referendum
- number of invalid requests for a referendum.

B County Office Reports

County Offices shall certify and transmit the results and expenses using Exhibit 3 to the State Office, as soon requests are counted, but no later than **June 25, 2014**.

The results in each county may be made available to the public upon notification by the FSA Administrator that the final results have been released by the Secretary. A copy of the report shall be posted for 30 calendar days **following** the date of notification by the FSA Administrator in the County Office in a conspicuous place accessible to the public.

C State Office Reports

Each State Office shall:

- total and summarize the results and expenses contained in each of the reports from County Offices on Exhibit 3
- include associated costs incurred by the State Office on Exhibit 3
- certify and transmit State summary Exhibit 3 to DAFO, as soon as possible, but no later than **June 27, 2014** (negative reports are **required**)
- make available, for public inspection, the State results and summary for a period of 1 year **after** the results have been released
- retain 1 copy of State results until further notice.

AMS Instructions for Conducting the Request for Referendum (Continued)

7 Additional Information (Continued)

D Results of the Request for Referendum

The results of the Request for Referendum will be issued by USDA in an official news release and published in the Federal Register.

E Disposition of Records

Each CED will place in a sealed container, marked “Soybean Request for Referendum”, all LS-51-1’s, accompanying documentation, any other related material, and county summaries. The records will be placed in a secure location under CED’s custody and retained until further notice.

News Release

The following AMS news release is posted at www.ams.usda.gov/AMSV1.0/SoybeanPage. County Offices shall include excerpts from the following in routine County Office newsletters and free press.

USDA Sets Date for Soybean Request for Referendum

WASHINGTON, March 4, 2014 – The U.S. Department of Agriculture today announced that it will offer soybean producers the opportunity to request a referendum on the Soybean Promotion and Research Order (Order), as authorized under the Soybean Promotion, Research, and Consumer Information Act (Act).

The Act requires the Secretary of Agriculture to conduct a Request for Referendum every 5 years after the initial referendum, which was conducted in 1994. The last Request for Referendum was conducted in 2009. Soybean producers who are interested in having a referendum to determine whether to continue the Soybean Checkoff Program are invited to participate.

The Request for Referendum will be conducted at USDA's county Farm Service Agency (FSA) offices. To be eligible to participate, producers must certify and provide documentation that shows that they produced soybeans and paid an assessment on the soybeans during the period of Jan. 1, 2012, through Dec. 31, 2013.

Beginning May 5 and continuing through May 30, 2014, producers may obtain a form by mail, fax, or in person from the FSA county offices. Forms may also be obtained via the internet at <http://www.ams.usda.gov/AMSV1.0/SoybeaninformationontheSoybeanRequestforReferendum> during the same time period. Individual producers and other producer entities may request a referendum at the county FSA office where their administrative farm records are maintained. For the producer not participating in FSA programs, the opportunity to request a referendum will be provided at the county FSA office where the producer owns or rents land. Completed forms and supporting documentation must be returned to the appropriate county FSA office by fax or in person no later than close of business May 30, 2014; or if returned by mail, must be postmarked by midnight May 30, 2014, and received in the county FSA office by close of business on June 5, 2014.

USDA will conduct a referendum if at least 10 percent of the nation's 569,998 soybean producers support a referendum. Not more than one-fifth of the producers who support having a referendum can be from any one State.

The Soybean Checkoff Program is administered by a 70-member producer board and is designed to expand uses of soybeans and soybean products in domestic and foreign markets. The national Soybean Checkoff Program is financed by a mandatory assessment of one-half of 1 percent of the net market price of soybeans.

Notice of the Request for Referendum will be published in the March 4, 2014, Federal Register. For more information, contact James Brow, Research and Promotions Branch; Livestock, Poultry and Seed Program, AMS, USDA; STOP 0251 - Room 2610-S; 1400 Independence Avenue, SW; Washington, D.C. 20250-0251; tel. (202) 720-0633; or via the Internet at <http://www.ams.usda.gov/AMSV1.0/SoybeaninformationontheSoybeanRequestforReferendum>.

State and County Office FSA Transmittal of Results and Expenses Sheet

The following sheet is available at <http://intranet.fsa.usda.gov>. CLICK “FFAS Employee Forms/Publications Site” and CLICK “Find Current Forms Using Our Form Number Search”. For “Form Number”, ENTER “Soybean Results”.

This form is available electronically.		
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE Farm Service Agency		
STATE AND COUNTY OFFICE FSA TRANSMITTAL OF RESULTS AND EXPENSES SHEET FOR SOYBEAN REQUEST FOR REFERENDUM		
1. State Name	2. County Name	
		Total Number
3. Total number of producers who filed LS-51 (Request for Referendum).		
4. Number of eligible producers requesting a referendum.		
5. Number of ineligible producers requesting a referendum.		
6. Number of valid requests for a referendum.		
7. Number of invalid requests for referendum.		
List State and County Expenses (For Use by State and County Offices).		
8. List Grade and Title of personnel working on referendum for referendum, including COC.	Hours Worked	Costs \$
a.		
b.		
c.		
d.		
e.		
9. Total Hours Worked:		
10. Reproduction Costs.		
11. Mailing Costs.		
12. Envelope Costs.		
13. Postage Costs.		
14. Total Costs:		
15. Certification:		
I hereby certify that I have reviewed the information on this form, and that it is true, complete, and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief.		
A. NAME OF PREPARER	B. TITLE OF PREPARER	C. DATE PREPARED (MM-DD-YYYY)
NOTE: County Offices shall email results to their State Office. State Offices shall email results to National Office; rick.pinkston@wdc.usda.gov.		

Request for Referendum Calendar

Dates	Event
January 1, 2012, through December 31, 2013	Representative period.
May 5 through May 30, 2014	Request for Referendum period (4 weeks).
May 30, 2014	FAX and in-person LS-51-1's must be received by COB.
May 30, 2014	Mailed LS-51-1's must be postmarked no later than midnight.
June 5, 2014	Mailed LS-51-1's must be received in the County Office by COB.
June 6, 2014	FSA begins canvassing and counting LS-51-1's. FSA should begin notifying ineligible producers in writing.
June 11, 2014	Last day for FSA to notify ineligible producers in writing.
June 18, 2014	Last day for ineligible producer to provide additional information about eligibility.
June 18, 2014	Last day for FSA to determine eligibility.
June 19, 2014	All LS-51-1's must be counted.
June 25, 2014	Final date for County Offices to send results and expenses to State Offices (Exhibit 3).
June 27, 2014	Final date for State Offices to send results and expenses to DAFO (Exhibit 3).

Questions and Answers About the Soybean Request for Referendum**Q1 How was the Soybean Checkoff Program established?**

A1 The Soybean Promotion and Research Order (Order) is authorized by the Soybean Promotion, Research, and Consumer Information Act (Act) [7 U.S.C. 6301-6311]. The Act was passed as part of the 1990 Farm Bill and authorized the establishment of a national soybean promotion, research, and consumer information program. The Soybean Checkoff Program became effective on July 9, 1991, when the Order was published. Assessments began September 1, 1991.

Q2 Who administers the Soybean Checkoff Program?

A2 The Soybean Checkoff Program is administered by the United Soybean Board (Board), which has 70 members representing 30 States and 2 combined units. Members of the Board are appointed by the Secretary of Agriculture (Secretary). The Board develops budgets and contracts to carry out a coordinated program of promotion, research, consumer information, and industry information. The Board's office is located in Chesterfield, Missouri.

Q3 What is the Department of Agriculture's (USDA) role in the Soybean Checkoff Program?

A3 USDA has 2 basic roles under the Act. The first role is to assist with the implementation of the Act, which includes preparing and publishing in the Federal Register rules and regulations, referendum rules, and other required documents. The second role is to oversee the Soybean Checkoff Program's activities conducted by the Board to ensure that they comply with the law.

Q4 What is a Request for Referendum?

A4 A Request for Referendum is an opportunity for producers to say they would like to be offered a referendum on the Soybean Checkoff Program. If the results of the Request for Referendum indicate there are not enough producers wanting a referendum, a referendum will not be conducted. Participation is voluntary, and only individuals who desire a referendum on the Soybean Checkoff Program should participate.

Q5 When and where will the Request for Referendum be conducted?

A5 The Request for Referendum will be conducted **May 5 through May 30, 2014**, at county Farm Service Agency (FSA) offices. Individual producers and authorized entity representatives may participate at the county FSA office where their entity's administrative farm records are maintained. Producers that do not participate in FSA programs can participate at the FSA office located in the county where the producer owns or rents land. To find your county FSA office, contact the State FSA office or visit <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/FSA/stateOffices?area=stoffice&subject-landing&topic=landing>.

Questions and Answers About the Soybean Request for Referendum (Continued)**Q6 Who will participate in the Request for Referendum?**

A6 Only those persons who are eligible to participate and favor a referendum on the Soybean Checkoff Program should participate. Those persons who do not desire a referendum on the Soybean Checkoff Program would not participate in the Request for Referendum. Participating in the Request for Referendum is voluntary.

Q7 Who is “eligible” to participate?

A7 Producers must certify that they, or the entity they are authorized to represent, paid an assessment at some time between January 1, 2012, and December 31, 2013. Each producer entity is entitled to only 1 request. Any group of individuals, such as families, joint tenants, a partnership, or a corporation as a producer entity may only make 1 request for a referendum. However, any individual who is an eligible producer separate from the group may request a referendum separately.

Q8 What will I need to fill out?

A8 To request a referendum, a producer will complete form LS-51-1, Soybean Promotion and Research Order Request for Referendum, and provide supporting documentation showing that soybean assessments were paid during the representative period. Form LS-51-1 may be obtained by mail, fax, or in person from FSA county offices or via the Internet at <http://www.ams.usda.gov/AMSV1.0/SoybeaninformationontheSoybeanRequestforReferendum> during the Request for Referendum period. Completed LS-51-1's and supporting documentation must be returned to the appropriate county FSA office by fax or in person no later than close of business May 30, 2014; or if returned by mail, must be postmarked by midnight May 30, 2014, and received in the county FSA office by close of business on June 5, 2014.

Q9 What will determine whether or not USDA will conduct a Referendum?

A9 If at least 10 percent of eligible producers request a referendum, with no more than one-fifth being producers in any 1 State, USDA will conduct a referendum within 1 year from that determination. If results of the Request for Referendum indicate that a referendum is not supported, a referendum would not be conducted.

Q10 When will the results be announced and how?

A10 USDA will likely announce the results in July or August of 2014. USDA will publish a news release and issue a notice in the Federal Register announcing the results of the Request for Referendum. The results will also be posted on the Internet at <http://www.ams.usda.gov/AMSV1.0/SoybeaninformationontheSoybeanRequestforReferendum>.

Questions and Answers About the Soybean Request for Referendum (Continued)**Q11 Can eligible soybean farmers request a Soybean Checkoff Program Request for Referendum beyond May 30, 2014?**

A11 No, to be counted as a valid request, eligible producers must ensure that request form (LS-51-1) and accompanying documentation is delivered in person or by fax, to the appropriate County FSA office no later than May 30, 2014. If returned by mail, request form (LS-51-1) and accompanying documentation must be postmarked no later than May 30, 2014, and received at the appropriate county FSA office by close of business on June 5, 2014.

Q12 Why is there a Soybean Checkoff Program Request for Referendum period every 5 years?

A12 The Act requires the Secretary to conduct a Request for Referendum every 5 years after the initial referendum, which was conducted in 1994. The previous Request for Referendum was conducted in 2009. Soybean producers who are interested in having a referendum to determine whether to continue the Soybean Checkoff Program are invited to participate.

Q13 If Qualified State Soybean Boards (QSSB's) or soybean farmers want to contact someone at USDA about the Soybean Checkoff Program Request for Referendum, who should they contact and how can they contact them?

A13 For more information, contact:

Livestock, Poultry, and Seed Program
USDA, AMS, Research and Promotion Branch
1400 Independence Avenue SW, Room 2610
STOP 0251
Washington, DC 20250-0251
Telephone: 202-720-0633
Web Address: www.ams.usda.gov/lsmarketingprograms

Example of LS-51-1, Soybean Promotion, Research, and Information Order Request for Referendum

<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; display: inline-block;">Print Form</div>	<small>FORM APPROVED – OMB NO. 0581-0093</small>
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AGRICULTURAL MARKETING SERVICE	
<h2 style="margin: 0;">SOYBEAN PROMOTION AND RESEARCH ORDER REQUEST FOR REFERENDUM</h2>	
<p><i>According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, an agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number. The valid OMB control number for this information collection is 0581-0093. The time required to complete this information collection is estimated to average 6 minutes per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information.</i></p> <p><i>The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, and where applicable, sex, marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, political beliefs, reprisal, or because all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TDD). To file a complaint of discrimination, write to USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410, or call (800) 795-3272 (voice) or (202) 720-6382 (TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.</i></p>	
CERTIFICATION STATEMENT	
<p><i>I HEREBY CERTIFY that I am a soybean producer or producer entity that I am authorized to represent and have paid an assessment sometime during January 1, 2012, through December 31, 2013. I am requesting a referendum only once in the same capacity registered. I FURTHER CERTIFY that the supporting documentation that I am providing along with this form is true, complete, and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief. Failure to provide supporting documentation showing that a soybean assessment was paid and complete and sign this form will invalidate the request.</i></p>	
<div style="border-bottom: 1px solid black; height: 1.2em; margin-bottom: 5px;"></div> <small>NAME OF INDIVIDUAL PRODUCER OR OTHER PRODUCER ENTITY (Print)</small>	
<div style="border-bottom: 1px solid black; height: 1.2em; margin-bottom: 5px;"></div> <small>ADDRESS (Street, P.O. Box, or Route No., City, State, ZIP Code)</small>	
<div style="border-bottom: 1px solid black; height: 1.2em; margin-bottom: 5px;"></div> <small>TELEPHONE NUMBER (Including Area Code)</small>	<div style="border-bottom: 1px solid black; height: 1.2em; margin-bottom: 5px;"></div> <small>COUNTY</small>
<p>IMPORTANT: Sign and date this form if you wish to request a referendum on the Soybean Promotion and Research Order.</p>	
<div style="border-bottom: 1px solid black; height: 1.2em; margin-bottom: 5px;"></div> <small>SIGNATURE OF PRODUCER OR PREPRESENTATIVE OF PRODUCER ENTITY</small>	<div style="border-bottom: 1px solid black; height: 1.2em; margin-bottom: 5px;"></div> <small>DATE</small>
<div style="border-bottom: 1px solid black; height: 1.2em; margin-bottom: 5px;"></div> <small>TITLE (If applicable)</small>	
<small>LS-51-1 (01-14)</small>	